



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

401 E Street, SW – 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20024



Drug-related Fatal Overdoses: January 1, 2021, to June 31, 2022

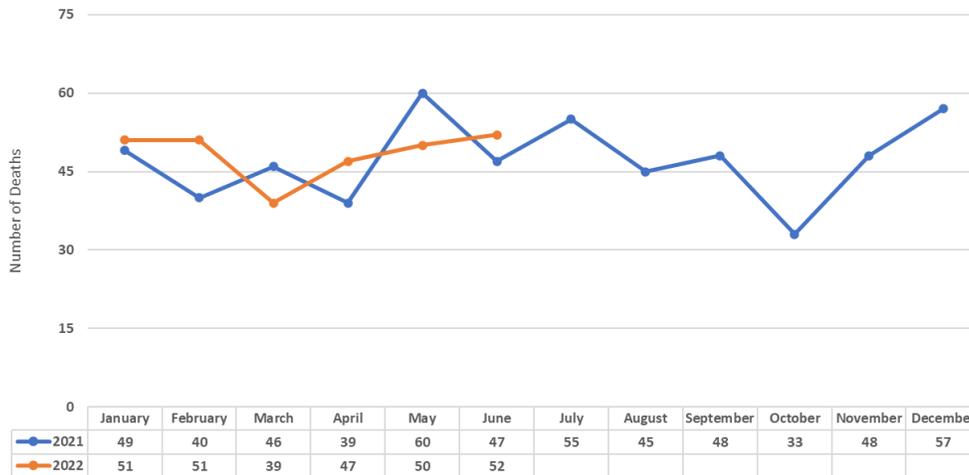
Report Date: December 19, 2022

The DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) investigated a total of **857** deaths due to the use of substances from January 1, 2021, through June 31, 2022. This report examines the presence of opioids, stimulants, and alcohol, in deaths observed at the OCME.

Trends in Deaths due to Drug Use

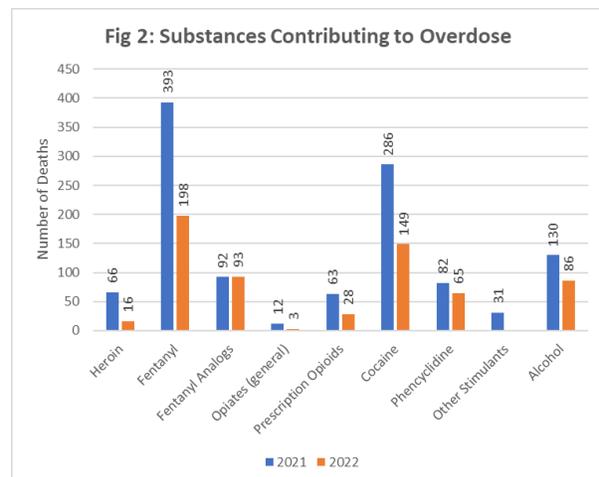
Similar to the rest of the country, the number of fatal drug related overdoses in the District of Columbia has increased over the past several years. On average, there were 47 drug-related accidental overdoses per month in 2021, with deaths peaking in May, June, and July (Fig 1). On average, there were 48 drug-related accidental overdoses per month during the first half of 2022.

Fig 1: Number of Accidental Drug Deaths by Month



Incidence of Drugs

Figure 2 displays the substances identified through toxicology testing of decedents from January 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022. The most prevalent substance identified was fentanyl, followed by cocaine. Fentanyl analogs include fluorofentanyl, acetyl fentanyl, despropionyl-fentanyl, para-Fluorofentanyl, and para-Fluorobutyryl fentanyl. Prescription opioids include methadone, morphine, codeine, tramadol, oxycodone, oxymorphone, buprenorphine, hydromorphone, and hydrocodone. Other stimulants include amphetamines, methamphetamines, synthetic marijuana, and eutylone, N-ethylpentylone, pentylone, and N,N-dimethylpentylone.

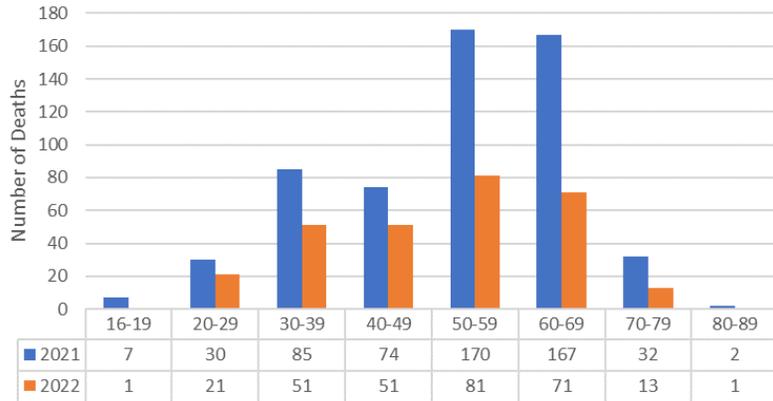


Demographics

Age

Overall, approximately **57%** of all fatal drug overdoses occurred among adults between the ages of 50-69 years old (Fig 3). From January 1, 2021 through June 31, 2022, deaths due to drug use were more prevalent among people ages 50 to 59 (**29%**).

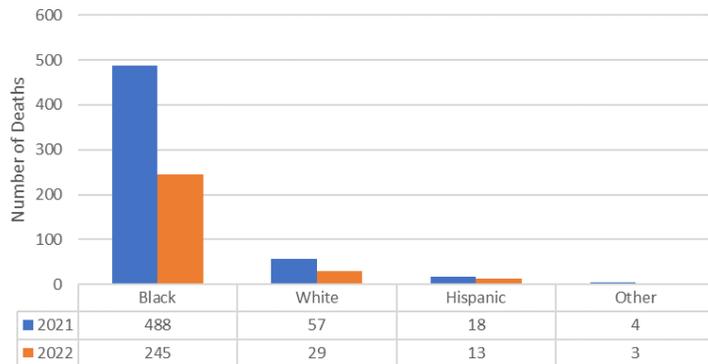
Fig 3: Accidental Drug Deaths by Age Group



Race and Ethnicity

Overall, **733** or **86%** of all drug-related deaths were among Blacks (Fig 4). This trend is consistent with opioid-related deaths.

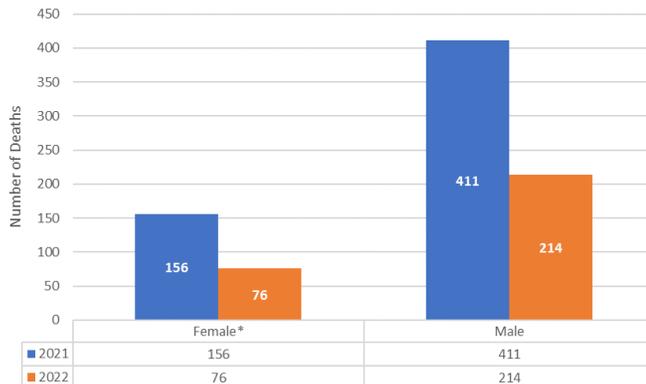
Fig 4: Accidental Drug Deaths by Race and Ethnicity



Gender

Between January 1, 2021 to June 31, 2022, **72%** fatal drug overdoses occurred in Males (Fig 5).

Fig 5: Accidental Drug Deaths by Gender



1 transgender female death in 2021

Jurisdiction of Residence

Majority of fatal overdoses observed at the OCME from January 1, 2021 to June 31, 2022 were residents of D.C. (Fig 6a). Within D.C., **62%** of all fatal overdoses during this period occurred in Ward 5, 7, and 8 (n= 379) (Fig 6b).

Fig 6a: Accidental Drug Deaths by Jurisdiction of Residence

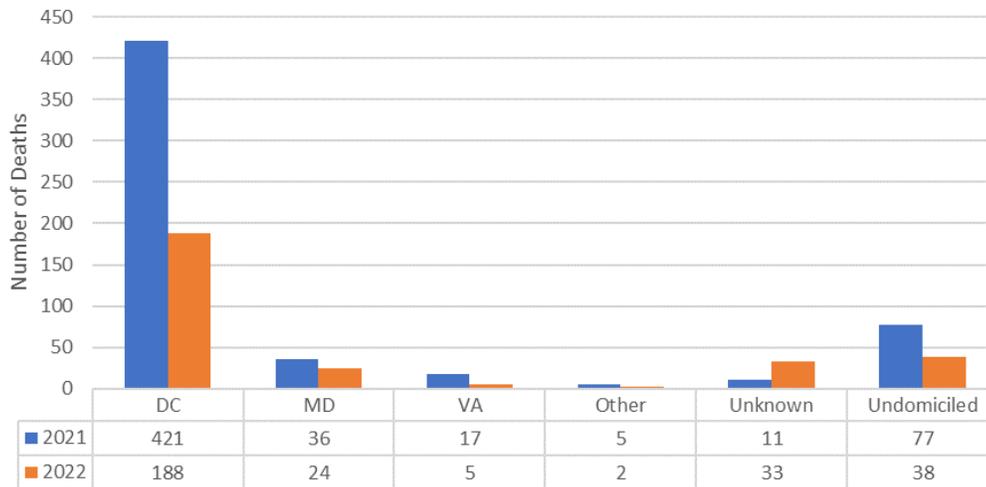


Fig 6b: Accidental Drug Deaths by Ward of Residence

